Who is Jamil Al-Amin?

Imam Jamil was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Those familiar with the social justice movements of the 1960s would probably associate Imam Jamil with his former name, H. Rap Brown.

He became involved in the social justice movement at the young age of nineteen. By 1966, Brown became a field organizer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Greene County, Alabama. This was one of the first examples of his involvement in the civil rights movement, which characterized American politics and culture in the 1960s.

By 1967, at the age of 23, Brown was elected chairman of the SNCC after Stokely Carmichael, one of its founding members, was ousted. During Carmichael's chairmanship, the SNCC moved from a philosophy of nonviolence to that of 'Black Power,' by encouraging African-Americans to move to other forms of political and cultural empowerment. Newsweek magazine described the new chairman as:

"…a disenchanted ex-poverty worker who affects sunglasses indoors and out, a droopy mustache, a bushy 'natural' coif and a curdled view of the white world…He preaches armed eye-for-an-eye self-defense for Negroes and packs a 12-gauge 'cracker gun' in his own dusty Plymouth."

A national figure, H. Rap Brown was in great demand as a speaker. In July 1967, he addressed a civil rights rally in Cambridge, Maryland. Brown urged about 400 people to fight fire with fire. "Black folks built America, and if America don't come around, we're going to burn America down," he was quoted as saying. As he was escorting a lady to her home, some persons fired at him from the bushes. He was injured by a shotgun pellet to his forehead. Subsequently, rioting broke out. Brown was accused of inciting the riot, and with the charge pending, he was arrested. A federal judge gave him the maximum sentence of five years in 1968.

At a rally in Oakland on February 17, 1968, he and Stokely Carmichael were made honorary officers of the Black Panther Party in a merger of the two groups. Brown was named minister of justice. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was founded in October, 1966, in Oakland, California by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. The name was later shortened to the Black Panther Party (BPP). It grew to at least 5,000 members nationwide, with chapters in over half of the United States, as well as an international branch in Algeria. Its programs included free health clinics and free breakfast programs for children. But this posed a threat to the predominantly white power structure of the time, and the vast majority of the white public. For them, the Black Panthers meant anti-government militancy.

A police raid on the Panthers' headquarters in Chicago resulted in the deaths of two of the party's leaders. Police riddled the apartment with bullets in a controversial show of force. Earlier the same year, Seale and other Panthers had been charged with killing a suspected informer. An undeclared war was being waged against the Panthers. While the sentence for a 1968 arms conviction was on appeal, and as the state of Maryland was preparing to try him for the Cambridge riot, Brown went into hiding in 1970. The FBI added him to its 'Most Wanted' list. Brown eluded the FBI for a year and a half, reappearing after 17 months on October 16th, 1971. With three supporters who had joined him he led an attack on a New York City bar, targeted for its exploitation of the community. A shootout with police ensued, and Brown was wounded and captured.



While Brown was in jail awaiting his trial, he converted to Islam. A fellow prisoner suggested he name himself, "The Trustworthy," or "Al-Amin" in Arabic. He adopted the name Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin. He was sentenced to five-to-fifteen years in Attica State Prison. After three years in various state penitentiaries, Imam Jamil won parole in 1976. His total jail and prison time was five years, including two years in jail prior to sentencing.

In August of 1995, Imam Jamil was arrested in connection with a shooting the previous month of a young man in his neighborhood. He was charged with aggravated assault after the man claimed Imam Jamil shot him. Later, however, this man withdrew this statement, saying he was pressured by authorities to identify Imam Jamil as the assailant.

On March 16th, 2000, Fulton County Deputy Sheriff Ricky Kinchen was shot and later died. Another deputy, Aldranon English, was wounded after being shot by a man outside Imam Jamil's store. They were trying to deliver an arrest warrant to

Imam Jamil, for failing to appear in court in January of 2000, on charges of theft by receiving stolen property and impersonating a police officer. Those charges dated back to the incident in May 1999. English identified the shooter in the March 16th incident as Imam Jamil.

Imam Jamil was arrested in Lowndes County, Alabama, following a four-day U.S.-wide manhunt. A grand jury in Atlanta indicted him for murder in connection with the shooting death of deputy Kinchen the previous month. He was indicted on one count of murder, four counts of felony murder, two counts of aggravated assault and six other lesser charges.

The State of Georgia announced that it planned to pursue a death penalty conviction against Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin. From 1992 to 1997, the FBI and Atlanta police investigated the former black militant once known as H. Rap Brown in connection with everything from domestic terrorism to gun-running to 14 homicides in Atlanta's West End, according to police investigators' reports, FBI documents and interviews. The FBI investigation ended in August 1997 without charging him of any crime. In his only public comment on his arrest, Al-Amin called it a 'government conspiracy.' Atlanta Journal Constitution (April 1/00).

In June of 2000, Otis Jackson, 26, confessed to killing the police officer, but he later recanted. Imam Jamil's defense team was not informed of the confession. Despite this fact, Al-Amin was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison.

It is clear that by recent events of targeting revolutionaries from the past, that Jamil's case is an attempt for the U.S. government to seek revenge from the past. He is innocent of this crime. By all definitions, he is a political prisoner.

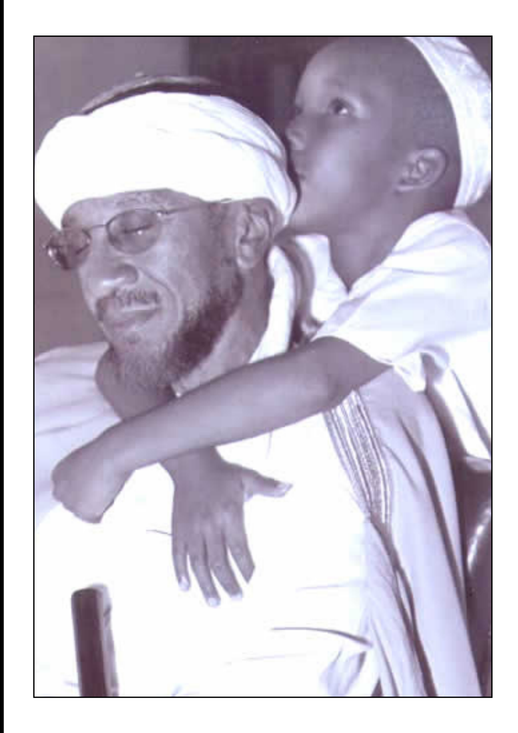
Free Jamil Al-Amin

Write to Jamil Al-Amin at:
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Local groups supporting Jamil:
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Jamil Al-Amin



A Trumped up Conviction 40 Years in the Making

